

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 12, and 14-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by patent application WO 01/08722 to Vinci; rejected claims 7-11, 13, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vinci in view of GB 2 067 075; rejected claims 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vinci in view of EP 0 611 227; and allowed claim 38.

At the outset, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of claim 38.

By this Amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1, 6-11, and 21-37. Applicants have amended claims 4, 14, and 20. Applicants have also added claims 39-49. Claims 4, 5, 12-20, and 38-49 are currently pending. All currently pending claims, including all claims amended and added by this Amendment depend from allowable claim 38.

The subject matter of new claims 39 and 40 correspond to originally-filed claims 2 and 3, however new claims 39 and 40 depend from allowable claim 38. The subject matter of new claims 41-49 correspond to originally-filed claims 21-29, however new claims 41-49 depend from allowable claim 38. Accordingly, claims 39-49 are allowable at least due to their dependence from allowable claim 38.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-6, 12, and 14-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by patent application WO 01/08722 to Vinci; claims 7-11, 13, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vinci in view of GB 2 067 075; and claims 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vinci in view of EP 0 611 227. In order to further prosecution of this application, however, Applicants have canceled claims 1-3, 7-11,

and 35 and have amended claims 4, 5, and 12-20 to depend from allowable claim 38. Accordingly, claims 4, 5, and 12-20 are allowable at least due to their dependence from allowable claim 38.

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 4, 5, 12-20, and 38-49 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claims 4, 5, and 12-20, and the addition of new claims 38-49 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the final action by the Examiner presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicant's invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the Amendment would allow the Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants submit that the entry of the amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this


Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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